

Dear Facilitator,

These shared agreements support us in creating learning environments that acknowledge differences and move towards ways of being together and learning that are less oppressive. We understand these agreements as a way to open structures for collective responsibility and accountability. As a facilitator/moderator we invite you to carefully consider each of these points and to enact the more specific statements at the end of this list as an integral part of your teaching practice. When introducing these agreements at the beginning of your input we invite you to first begin with a name, pronoun and access needs round.

Access needs describe what you might need to be fully in the space -- this might include a pillow to sit more comfortably, automated captions on a screen, a light to be turned off etc.

And from here to read out each of the agreements one by one, with a different person in the room each reading out a different line – to get everyone’s voice into the space – and so that everyone can read and hear these agreements. At the end of reading, please take a pause and ask if anyone would like to add anything to the agreements, and if anyone has any questions (about terms) or rephrasing of ideas/concepts that would be needed. These agreements are always open to be edited and changed.

We hope this support makes for good classroom experiences and we look forward to receiving any feedback or questions.

With the best,

Ren Loren Britton (Accessibility) & Ladan Yalzadeh (Inclusion & Diversity)

Ren Loren Britton: Accessibility Friend <accessibilityfriend@transartinstitute.org>

Ladan Yalzadeh: Community Director <community@transartinstitute.org>

Our Intention

To create a braver & inclusive environment that fosters learning and growth

Agreements

- We treat each other with kindness and respect.
- When in session, we are present and participating fully. That said, we will each take responsibility for our own well-being by taking breaks or opting out.
- We assume best intentions in all interactions. We recognize that intent is different than impact and take responsibility for how we impact others despite our intended actions or words.
- We create and hold space for multiple truths.
- We do not make assumptions about someone else's identity including gender, race, ethnicity, age, etc. furthermore, not all disabilities are apparent, please don't assume what is normal for other people.
- We recognize power dynamics and our own unconscious biases and remain aware of any privileges that we bring.
- We uphold confidentiality regarding information we share with others outside of the Transart environment. Do not share or publish anything without consent.
- If asking others to engage with something that they may find have an emotional impact on people in the space, please let others know before doing so. It is important that everyone is aware and ready to discuss difficult topics or have the opportunity to disengage.
- Avoid generalization such as using "we" statements, instead speak from your experiences and use "I" statements.
- There are as many teachers in this room as there are people in this space.
- This is a multilingual space. Please ask for clarification or translation.
- Caretaking is a responsibility shared by everyone --> please feel free to check in with your neighbour, and neighbours feel free to say yes I need something or no I don't.

- We practice being mindful of taking too much or too little space. Please make an effort to communicate in spoken and textual forms.
- We recognize that discomfort and uncertainty may arise during our sessions. We may not always know the answers nor arrive at neat, tidy resolutions. We will make mistakes along the way. Remember we are all here to learn and to grow both individually and collectively and this might mean working with discomfort at times.
- Would anyone in the group like to add anything else to our Agreements?

If you are moderating/facilitating a space:

- When someone accidentally breaks one of these conditions: Please kindly point out or DM (orally or in the written form), a moderator if a collective condition is not respected. Let's then take a moment to address and care for the space together.
- When structural violence is replicated (e. g. ableist slurs): Let us make sure that people affected by this receive the care they need first. Let us set further conditions to make sure that this is not repeated. Moving from a harm reduction framework, we will try to address the harm done and share resources. As facilitators a moderator may ban someone from this space if need be. A list of ableist language is here: <https://www.autistichoya.com/p/ableist-words-and-terms-to-avoid.html>
- Moderators work with frames of taking responsibility for caring for the space, we are not the only ones who do this work - everyone here does at times too, however we focus on taking responsibility for what comes up.
- A pad for the group where non-apparent topics or words that would need a content warning are shared: <https://pad.constantvzw.org/p/contentwarnings>

Giving and Receiving Feedback

We are continually receiving and giving feedback, both explicitly through oral and written language, and implicitly through gestures and tone of voice. It is important to distinguish feedback from evaluation. Feedback is a formative assessment tool that provides information regarding learning in the learning environment using descriptive,

constructive, and nonjudgmental language. Evaluation is a summative assessment tool that judges learning and allows for comparison against a standard of learning.

Giving Effective Feedback

Prioritize your ideas. Limit your feedback to the most important issues. Consider the feedback's potential value to the receiver and how you would respond – could you act on the feedback? As well, too much feedback provided at a single time can be overwhelming to the recipient.

- Balance the content. It is important to provide the recipient with balanced feedback regarding their strengths and their opportunities for growth. Providing feedback on strengths acts to identify and reinforce the learning, skills, and behaviors that the recipient should continue engaging in. Providing feedback on opportunities for growth and improvement with actionable and tangible methods of implementation enables the recipient to make necessary changes.
- Be specific. Avoid general comments that may be of limited use to the receiver. Try to include examples to illustrate your statement. As well, offering alternatives rather than just giving advice allows the receiver to decide what to do with your feedback.
- Be realistic. Feedback should focus on what can be changed. It is useless and frustrating for recipients to get comments on something over which they have no control. Also, remember to avoid using the words “always” and “never.” People’s behavior is rarely that consistent.
- Own the feedback. When offering evaluative comments, use the pronoun “I” rather than “they” or “one,” which would imply that your opinion is universally agreed on. Remember that feedback is merely your opinion.
- Be timely. Seek an appropriate time to communicate your feedback. Being prompt is key since feedback loses its impact if delayed too long. Delayed feedback can also cause feelings of guilt and resentment in the recipient if the opportunity for improvement has passed. As well, if your feedback is primarily negative, take time to prepare what you will say or write.
- Offer continuing support. Feedback should be a continuous process, not a one-time event. After offering feedback, make a conscious effort to follow up. Let recipients know you are available if they have questions, and, if appropriate, ask for another opportunity to provide more feedback in the future.

Receiving Feedback Effectively

- Listen to the feedback given. This means not interrupting. Hear the person out, and listen to what they are really saying, not what you assume they will say. You can absorb more information if you are concentrating on listening and understanding rather than being defensive and focusing on your response.
- Be aware of your responses. Your body language and tone of voice often speak louder than words. Try to avoid putting up barriers. If you look distracted and bored, that sends a negative message as well. Attentiveness, on the other hand, indicates that you value what someone has to say and puts both of you at ease.
- Be open. This means being receptive to new ideas and different opinions. Often, there is more than one way of doing something and others may have a completely different viewpoint on a given topic. You may learn something worthwhile.
- Understand the message. Make sure you understand what is being said to you, especially before responding to the feedback. Ask questions for clarification if necessary. Listen actively by repeating key points so that you know you have interpreted the feedback correctly. In a group environment, ask for others' feedback before responding. As well, when possible, be explicit as to what kind of feedback you are seeking beforehand so you are not taken by surprise.
- Reflect and decide what to do. Assess the value of the feedback, the consequences of using it or ignoring it, and then decide what to do because of it. Your response is your choice. If you disagree with the feedback, consider asking for a second opinion from someone else.
- Follow up. There are many ways to follow up on feedback. Sometimes, your follow-up will simply involve implementing the suggestions given to you. In other situations, you might want to set up another meeting to discuss the feedback or to re-submit the revised work.